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Issue No. 74
May 2011

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Printed by TwentyFourSeven

Editor's Comment



CAMPAIGN group RAW - Residents Against the Windfarm - have put forward a convincing argument for rejecting the offer of a "Community Benefit Fund" as part of the price for accepting a wind farm on Frodsham and Helsby Marshes.

It's based on money, of course. The benefit fund is thought to be worth around £1.5 million to support local community projects. But RAW say

windfarm operators Peel Energy would receive about £5 million a year in subsidies from electricity bills while the public would effectively pay £135 million more for electricity.

Not hard to see who benefits most - even before we start trying to define a "community benefit" that would, in fact, benefit everyone.

But, really, should arguments against a windfarm be based on

money?

Elsewhere in this issue, we report on a thoughtful evaluation by local businesses and others, of Frodsham's strengths and weaknesses, much of which could apply equally to Helsby.

Almost without exception, the "strengths" are directly, or indirectly attributable to the local environment. The Weaver Valley, the Sandstone Ridge, the walks, historic buildings, etc. The list goes on.

These are the things that make Frodsham and Helsby desirable places to live and to visit. Surely, they are things that money cannot buy.

They are also things which would suffer irreparable damage from the presence of a giant windfarm.

Lark Rise to Candleford

A FRESH adaptation of the classic story "Lark Rise to Candleford" - recently a hit TV series - is coming to Helsby Community Centre for one night only.

Cheshire Rural Touring Arts in conjunction with Helsby Entertainments is presenting a version by the New Perspective Theatre Company based on the original book by Flora Thompson - a gentle take on growing up in rural Oxfordshire in the twilight of the 19th century.

The production is part drama, part story telling, part folk music and is at once funny, touching and engrossing, a deeply affectionate picture of village life and a delightful introduction to an unforgettable cast of characters.

Thompson's vivid account of the dawn of a new age of "progress" that would sweep away the centuries-old

way of life she knew so well has captivated readers for more than half a century.

The show is at Helsby on Sunday, May 22. Tickets are available from Andrew on 01928 726534.

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The only Royal Wedding street party in town!

IT all started with a casual chat over a drink on Elaine Speedy's birthday - and ended with Frodsham's only street party to celebrate the Royal Wedding.

Residents of Coniston Drive decided to show the flag and celebrate the wedding big style.

Nearly 100 people agreed to join in and Elaine set up an organising committee.

She said: "I think some of us are being patriotic and some of us are just

out to have a good time.

"But let's face it, if a Royal Wedding isn't a good enough excuse to have a party, what is?"

At first, Elaine was a bit surprised to discover Coniston Drive was the only road in Frodsham to hold a party.

But when she discovered how much red tape was involved - special orders to close the street to traffic, etc., - she began to get an idea why. Organising the event has taken since mid-December!

"Fortunately, you can close our road without having too much effect on any others. Nobody will be inconvenienced much."

Arrangements were made to borrow tables from the local school. Union Jacks, bunting, balloons, etc. Music, entertainment for the children. Hot and cold food.

Elaine enthused: "We are really chuffed about this. It has got everyone talking to one another.

"Neighbours have become friends, people have got to know people they had only nodded to before. And that's before the party has even taken place!"



Golden golfers!

SIX founder members of Frodsham Golf Club are celebrating their Golden Weddings this year - and where better to celebrate than on the golf course!


Past president Bob Dudson and his wife Mary, Bill and Marlene Robinson and Brian and Hazel Tonge are all still active players.



The six "Golden Golfers" (left to right) Bob and Mary, Hazel and Brian and Marlene and Bill.

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'Best careers convention yet'

MORE than 60 exhibitors attended what was described as the most successful careers convention yet at Helsby High School.

Local and national companies were present at the event when students from Years 10-13 were given important information on a range of careers.

The exhibitors ranged from solicitors and architects to apprenticeship providers, the Army and universities.

Comments were positive.

Year 11 student Shaun Tittle said: "I got to see what was on offer for my age. I got some useful information from the path to take and how to achieve success."

Melissa Turk, from Riverside College, said: "The convention was brilliantly executed and a great turnout from other providers, employers and students - one of the best events I have ever attended."

The event demonstrated the school's commitment to up-to-date and relevant careers information for its students.

This was recognised nationally when the school achieved the prestigious Investors in Careers Award.



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Music to inspire memories

MUSIC which recalls past memories was the theme of a meeting of the Frodsham Recorded Music Society.

Speaker was Ken Hayes and the subject was the now traditional event of Musical Memories in which the speaker plays music which recalls past memories.

The first half of his presentation was happy and light-hearted and encouraged audience participation. It started with drummers, recalling his days in the Scouts and then moved on to the "military style music" of Sousa and other famous composers, each recalling happy memories.

His talk also included theatre-

attendance memories, including music from "Phantom of the Opera," film music, including "Schindler's List," and memories of ballet performances, including "Swan Lake."

The second half was derived from nostalgia connected with concerts he and his wife Beryl had attended over the years and included Elgar's "Enigma Variations" and an excerpt from Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Suite." He was thanked by Antony Jolly.

Treasurer John Grenside will be the speaker at the next meeting with the subject "Three Not of a Kind."

School's new theatre set to open

A NEW 300-seat theatre is to open at The King's School, Chester in June - further growing the school's reputation for excellence in drama.

It's the latest development at a dynamic school which keeps on increasing opportunities for its pupils.

Music is another strong feature at King's, with 25 music groups and more than 50 per cent of pupils involved in music in some way.

The curriculum has been re-designed for September to offer more challenging courses which stretch young minds from the minute they start with at the school at 11. It offers stimulating and innovative subjects to ensure that pupils are not limited by the narrow confines of public exams. King's are increasing the number of 'international GCSEs' they offer, considered more challenging than the standard GCSE course.

An ambitious afternoon of "Enrichment" will offer pupils courses such as Italian, Electronics, Astronomy - all intended to widen pupils' intellectual horizons, increase confidence and develop independent study and all qualities highly valued by the top universities.

Sport is also a real strength of the school with pupils competing at a national level for rowing and cricket, regional level for hockey and district level for many other sports. There are 120 clubs and activities offering an interest for everyone from poetry to Russian.

King's is holding fun taster days on June 23 and 24 which offer an opportunity to a taster day contact the admissions office or visit the website www.kingschester.co.uk/welcome



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Science students visit medical centre

PUPILS from Helsby High School visited the site of Frodsham's new medical centre as part of a science and engineering week.

A presentation from contractors Pochin explained how the company construct energy efficient and sustainable buildings - and then the Year 10 pupils had a tour of the site to see how the science and engineering involved is put into practice.

Advice on future careers was also offered to pupils interested in the fields of maths and science.

Throughout the week, pupils from all year groups carried out activities on the theme of "energy" - and not just in science lessons.

Maths, Geography, RE, Food

Technology, Languages and PE lessons all helped to reinforce the theme.

Head of chemistry Elizabeth Cullen said: "It was a very enjoyable week's experience with pupils relishing the range of activities on offer and furthering their scientific skills."

Sixth form students also put their energy into raising money for energy projects in the Third World, such as a solar powered water pump so that a village could have water pumped to it rather than people having to walk and collect it every day.

The students - and some teachers - also took it in turns to cycle on a fitness bike throughout the week with the aim of completing the equivalent 600km to raise money through sponsorship.



'Babies and bumps' group formed

NEW parents and parents-to-be from Frodsham and Helsby are being invited to a new support group.

Parenting charity NCT is holding a "Bumps and Babies" group once a month in the town. One of the organisers Heidi Snowden said: "Being a parent is a life-changing experience, it can bring joy but it can also be challenging and sometimes stressful."

"While everyone is aware that having a baby will change their life, exactly how the change will affect them varies from one person to another. NCT meet-ups offer you peer support and the opportunity to meet others in exactly the same situation as yourself."

The charity supports parents with a range of courses and a network of more than 300 local branches around the UK.

Further advice and details about future meetings in Frodsham and Helsby is available by contacting Nicola by emailing midcheshire@nct.org.uk or calling 0844 243 6207 Option 1.

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Gary Heaven, head of criminal law at Forshaws Davies Ridgway, explains: "If you are not guilty of an offence, don't ever be tempted to agree to a police caution without legal advice. You might think you're opting for a quiet life and it's just a note on a file - but the ramifications could come back to haunt you later in life.

"Police cautions always show up on CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checks and could stop you ever working in teaching or with children. And cautions for certain offences have even been known to invalidate your house insurance."

Whether you're being charged with a motoring offence or something much more serious, **never gamble with your future**, the stakes are too high not to take professional advice.

If you find yourself on the wrong side of the law, whatever the circumstances, contact our specialist criminal lawyers on 01928 739300 or outside office hours on 07808 140659 or visit www.fdrllaw.co.uk



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Frodsham - its stren

FRODSHAM, in a national survey, was ranked fifth out of 103 UK market towns for its 'individual character and distinctive shops and services'.

It has been identified by Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWC) as an area for investment.

But although it has many strengths, it also has weaknesses - and these were identified in a frank assessment given by delegates at a full day workshop organised by CWC and traders group Love Frodsham.

Taking part in the workshop, facilitated by Hilary Berg Consulting, were Love Frodsham chairman and owner of Frodsham Brewery, Barrie Davidson, Kevin Reynolds of NFU Mutual, resident Katie Atherton, Frodsham Town Council office manager Anne Pitt and Tony Clare and Angela Myers of CWC.

Main aim of Love Frodsham is "to make Frodsham the most visitor-friendly market town, and the delegates agreed the town was well placed to achieve this.

It is easily reached by road and rail, it has historical attractions, is set within the beautiful North Cheshire landscape and has many leisure activities.

The plan is for Love Frodsham and CWC to reach out to local, regional and national communities to firmly establish Frodsham as a destination brand.

Delegates identified Frodsham's strengths, including the fact that it is a friendly, welcoming historic market town, with independent retailers, major high street, a market, park and

arts centre, festivals, leisure centre and attractive setting.

It is a great starting point for visitors due to the proximity to Delamere, Kingsley, Manley, etc., and the start of the Sandstone Trail. It has the widest high street in Britain, niche retailers and good nightlife.

Weaknesses identified included: local community not yet engaged, proximity of competitive venues such as Chester and Cheshire Oaks, a shortage of parking, an eyesore swing bridge, restricted opening hours, an improving but limited food offer and the mixed quality of local pubs.

The workshop decided there was a need to promote the town as a hub for wider activities such as walking and cycling, more promotion as a centre for independent shops, an improved loyalty card scheme, more themed events, wider availability of food and drink and use of the station building as a visitor resource.

There was concern over the complacency of the local community, closure of shops and a potential to be "left behind" in a competitive market.

Delegates put forward a very positive view of Frodsham, pointing out that more than 60 local businesses pledged their support to Frodsham Forward - the precursor of Love Frodsham - and indicating a strong belief that this support remains and needs to be tapped into.

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Strengths and weakness

Looking at other successful market towns, the workshop concluded that Frodsham could do as well if the whole community got behind the Love Frodsham initiative.

But some businesses were not keen to alter their opening hours in line with what visitors expect - Sunday opening, for instance. The market, while an asset, was seen by many as a "fair weather" market.

It was suggested that Love Frodsham should work alongside CWC in lobbying for more independent traders to set up in the town, along with high street outdoor retailers.

The draft brand vision is:

"Frodsham is a unique and historic market town, renowned for its friendliness. Its busy high street and vibrant town centre are an attractive gateway to the beautiful outdoors of North Cheshire."

Over the next 12 months, the aim is to contact local interest groups and invite them to meetings and develop and distribute an information pack to local businesses and relevant groups.

CWC and the Love Frodsham delegates agreed findings of the workshop would best be used as a discussion guide to gain wider input prior to confirming a definitive brand and communications plan.



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Cross country runners make history!

FOR the first time in the school's history, all four of Helsby High School's teams qualified for the English Schools Athletics Association cross country finals at Alnwick Castle.



Luba Sirkina, Laura Gardiner, Kate Merrill, Emma Scott.

They were also the only school to have all four of their teams at the final - an achievement even more remarkable because most of the runners were from the younger of the two year groups.

The junior boys team (Year 7-8) was Billy Young, Ollie Upton, Dominic Molyneux, Chris Sherlock, Joe Davies, Marcus Lythgoe and Adrian Bennett. The junior girls team consisted of Annabel Kitchen, Georgia Aston-Massey, Amy Renton, Megan McEveley, Emily Ross and Charlotte Davies.

In the intermediate boys team (Year 9-10) were Tom Slijivic, Tom Jacobsen, Richie McGeachie, Matthew Hulse and Patrick Stradling while the intermediate girls team consisted of Kate Merrill, Luba Sirkina, Laura Gardiner and Emma Scott.

Unfortunately, due to some late withdrawals through injury and a variety of other reasons the teams were below full strength. But the team performance of the day went to the junior girls who finished in a very creditable 10th position.

In the junior girls race, Georgia Aston-Massey finished in 4th position - a tremendous achievement for a Year 7 who will be young enough to run again in the same race next year.

In the junior boys race, Marcus Lythgoe ran an incredibly brave race to finish in second place, only being overtaken in the last 200m by the national clubs champion.

Festival of junior football

THE annual Frodsham Festival of Football takes place at Helsby High School on June 11 and 12.

Organised, as usual, by Frodsham Junior Football Club, the tournament will involve seven-a-side mini soccer for boys in the Under Seven to Under 10 age groups, five-a-side soccer for boys in the Under 11 to Under 14 age groups and seven-a-side soccer for girls aged Under 10 to Under 12.

There will be a trophy for each age group, plus winners and runners-up medals.

In addition to the football, a variety of other events are being organised, including sideshows and food, to make the day an occasion for the whole family.

New exhibitions

TWO new exhibitions have opened at Frodsham's Castle Park Arts Centre and will continue until May 15.

In Galleries 1 and 2, the Cheshire Artists Network have a display of works in various media, including oils, watercolours, print making, photography, sculpture, ceramics, textiles, jewellery and graphic arts.

In Gallery 3 there is a photography exhibition entitled "Colour Splash" featuring the work of Joel Prince and Rick Haywood, to local photographers whose aim is to present their photography in a unique way, giving both viewing pleasure and lasting impressions.

'It runs in the family'



KINGSLEY Players present a hilarious farce, 'It Runs in the Family' on May 18-21.

The production will be presented in normal auditorium style on the first two nights but on the Friday and Saturday a two course meal will be served before the performance. Details: 07925 516760.

Picture shows the cast in rehearsal.

Downhill Run to go ahead

THE sixth annual Frodsham Downhill Run will go ahead in September in its usual form.

Doubts about whether the event could go on were raised earlier this year after council bosses raised safety concerns. But now, following negotiations between Frodsham Community Association, Cheshire West and Chester Council and the police, the race on September 10 is back on.

Organiser Sue Thomson said: "We are delighted we have managed to resolve the issues and the race will go ahead as usual."

Last year, more than 250 competitors took part in the race from the top of Frodsham Hill to Frodsham Community Centre.

The Downhill Race is now all that remains of the old Frodsham Carnival, other than a funfair and an open day at the community centre. But plans are being made to give the day a further boost next year with a new literary festival.

Mrs Thomson said: "There are people who still regret the end of the carnival parade, but I am afraid it just isn't feasible anymore. The carnival has changed many times over the last 30 years so, although a literary festival will be something completely different, we think it might provide a bit of a boost."

"The idea is to have a week-long event, with guest speakers, visiting writers or poets, workshops and possibly poetry and short-story competitions. We could even ask one of the local drama groups to put on a short play."

"There would be prizes which could be presented on the Saturday - the same day as the Downhill Run."

"We have not made any decisions yet. There are still a lot of things to sort out and we decided we did not have time to organise it for this year. So the literary festival will start in 2012."

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Motoring



Who needs artificial potholes?

TWO harsh winters have wrought havoc with local roads and potholes have become big news. So it may come as a surprise to some that there is a need for artificial potholes.

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An example is Ford's Lommel Proving Ground in Belgium where there are miles of test track that specifically re-create potholes and the other sorts of damaged road surfaces drivers can expect to encounter.

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Public spending cuts have added

to the problems caused by the two cold winters so Ford aim to ensure all their vehicles are built to cope.

All new Ford models are put through a tough testing and development process to ensure they not only offer class-leading levels of ride comfort for occupants but are easily capable of withstanding the loads placed upon components by damaged road surfaces.

The Lommel Proving Ground subjects new vehicles to a variety of highly demanding road surfaces and features some 50 miles of test track, many of which are designed specifically to put suspension systems to the ultimate test.

"We have created some of the worst potholes in Europe on our own test track. If our cars can pass these tests, then they can cope with almost anything they encounter on public roads," said EricJan Scharlee, technical specialist at Lommel. "You name the road surface - we have it at our proving ground."

Alfa's sporty Giulietta

THE latest incarnation of the Alfa Romeo Giulietta was launched last year to celebrate the Italian car manufacturer's centenary.

As one would expect from Alfa, it's a sporty model, designed to compete in the mid-size C-segment which now contributes one out of every four new cars sold across Europe.

It incorporates a range of advanced engineering and technical solutions to ensure the Giulietta can meet the needs of all customers in the sector, combining impeccable safety credentials, Italian style, comfort and functionality and, of course, oomph!

In addition, every customer can adapt the car to their specific driving

requirements, thanks to Alfa's DNA selector.

There is a range of five engines, three petrol and two diesel, all of which are turbocharged and Euro 5 emissions compliant.



Chickens arrive at school

THREE chickens have arrived at Frodsham Manor House Primary School as part of the school grounds project.

Pupils have named them Ginger Ninga, KFC and Nugget and they are enjoying life in their new Eggloo and laying eggs on a daily basis.

A start has also been made on a new sensory garden, the planning of an orienteering course and allotments for each class - all designed to encourage children to learn about their role on the planet and how to sustain it.



The chickens are with Lewis Mulcahy, Lily Ball and Sophie Webb

Cold callers warning

RESIDENTS of the Frodsham and Helsby area are being warned to be aware of cold-calling salespeople selling expensive burglar alarm monitoring contracts.

Trading Standards chiefs have received several reports of householders receiving unsolicited 'phone calls from home security firms.

The salespeople advise that they can take over an existing monitoring contract for an additional fee.

Vanessa Griffiths, regulatory services manager for investigations, said: "We are reminding residents of the Trading Standards message - always say no to anyone who contacts you out of the blue looking to sell goods or services.

"We would urge anyone considering a new alarm or monitoring system to research the market. Get recommendations from friends and family if possible and obtain at least three quotes."

For further advice or information on this issue, or any other Trading Standards matter, call Consumer Direct on 0845 4040 506.

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Chairman Janet Ford cutting a celebration cake, watched by (left to right) district inspectors Mike Harris, John White, Peter Waite, Bernard Cook and Tony Harbottle.

Footpath society's Jubilee celebration

NEARLY 80 people - including past and present walkers - attended the Jubilee Lunch of the Helsby-based Mid Cheshire Footpath Society.

The society - a registered charity - was formed in 1961 to ensure public footpaths in Mid Cheshire were kept clear of obstructions, safe and well signposted.

Secretary Steve Brumby said: "This role is every bit as important now as it was then and the society's district inspectors are the link with the various local authorities who are responsible for public footpaths in the Mid Cheshire Area."

Information about Mid Cheshire Footpath Society can be found on their website www.mcfs.org.uk

Advertiser's announcement

'Like being on permanent holiday'

LIVING at Kingsley Park is like being on permanent holiday, according to Nigel Gilding.

He should know, because it is now two years since he, his wife Georgina and their son, Sanderson, now aged seven, moved there.

They have loved every minute since on the 33-acre development, with its mature woodlands and direct access to the paths and trails of Delamere Forest.

Nigel said: "We moved from a similar style house not far away but the difference in life here is just amazing."

"We really do feel like we are on holiday. It is a very safe place and we don't worry about Sandy going out to play - it is like one big adventure playground for him."

"He still goes to Kingsley St John Primary school just down the road and we are in the catchment for Helsby High School so, like most people here, this will be our long-time home."

Kingsley Park has been created by specialist developer PJ Livesey

Group from conversion of the original Grade II listed buildings on the site and a handful of new build properties.

Four more family sized homes have just been released for sale.

The collection of three bedroom town houses are together known as Chestnut House. They are high specification family homes offering contemporary luxury in a rural setting. Each home has three large bedrooms, master ensuite and family bathrooms, bespoke fitted kitchens and bedroom furniture is also available. The living room is bright and spacious with French doors leading onto a South West facing garden and the woodland beyond.

For couples just starting out or people looking to downsize, the original hospital building has been converted into apartments. Just two, of these are still available.

Show homes are open Thursday to Monday, 10am to 5pm.

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10L Collapsible Water Carrier £2.65	Inflating Pillow £2.59	5L Foot Pump £4.99
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Euro MP visits scout group

NORTH West MEP Sajjad Karim dropped in on the 4th Frodsham Scout Group during a visit to the town.

He was greeted by scouts, group scout leader Ron Sayle and local Cheshire West and Chester councillors Andrew Dawson and Mark Ingram.

The scouts were recently awarded a £1,000 community grant for indoor bowling equipment to facilitate their work with older people - including bowls and mat winding equipment reducing manual handling and Sajjad visited the Scout Hut to see what their plans are for the project.

He said the building, an old school, had been completely renovated and extended by the scouts through their own fund raising and grants.

Remarkable

"It really is a remarkable structure and the scouts are keen to ensure it is used by the community as well as themselves.

"An indoor bowling facility is being set up by the scout group for the elderly residents of the area. Funds are needed to ensure the residents can use the facilities safely."

"The Scouts impressed Andrew and Mark with their presentation and their determination to maximise the use of the Scout Hut."

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